

Coaching Tip Number 39

Self-Encouragement and Coaching During Uncertain Times

Coaching tips will come out once a month to give you a flavor for what coaches do in an active coach/coachee relationship. If you have others that you would like this tip to go to each month you may send me their name and I will make sure they are added to the distribution list or you may forward this information yourself. If you are in need of coaching services you may contact Janie Moyers, MSFC Certified Internal Executive Coach at 544-7552.

Be willing to say to yourself, "I'm on the right road. I'm doing OK. I'm succeeding." We too frequently become adept at pointing out our flaws and identifying failures. Become equally adept at citing your achievements. Identify things you are doing now that you weren't doing one month ago... six months ago... a year ago. What habits have changed? Chart your progress.

Doing well once or twice is relatively easy. Continuously moving ahead is tough, in part, because we so easily revert to old habits and former lifestyles. Over the long run, you need to give yourself regular feedback to monitor your performance and reinforce yourself positively. Don't wait for an award ceremony, promotion, or a friend or mentor to show appreciation for your work. Take pride in your own efforts on a daily basis.

Moving forward during uncertain times is the perfect time to utilize a coach or to practice your own coaching skills. The uncertainty of the global economy, organizational modifications, and individual adjustments call for us to be of service to others as well as call on others to give us the support we need to be stable, engaged, and productive. Some of the biggest challenges we face today as leaders are:

- Managing People
- Too Much To Do
- Unclear Future
- Change Happening Too Fast
- Not Getting Enough Information

Leadership can make a real difference whether you are a company leader or just leading the people around you (family, friends, colleagues, etc.) every day. A good leader makes a difference by:

1. Establishing a clear vision and communicating
2. Making tough decisions and giving open feedback
3. Knowing what people need and helping them get it
4. Increasing communication and time spent sharing
5. Relating messages of truth and hope.

Jim Collins in his book "Good to Great" p. 88 gives a list of coaching techniques that work best:

- Let the truth be heard, then confront reality.
- Lead with questions not answers.
- Engage in dialogue not answers.
- Conduct autopsies without blame.

Coaching helps leaders do all of these. A coach helps to make the clients thinking visible and to provide information other people need. During uncertain times people need information; to know someone cares, a safe place to talk, and to be able to accomplish meaningful work. In William Bridges book “Transitions” he says it is not the changes that do you in, it is the transitions. Coaching is a partnership that accelerates others toward a higher level of performance. You as the coach will help identify clear goals and a path to reach them. The coach will provide feedback that is in service to others and demonstrates real care and concern. Once you are focused on the goal, questions should be asked that are open ended but never “Why” questions:

- What needs to happen?
- Have you looked at all levels of the goal (other employees, resources, location, etc.)?
- What is the timeframe to accomplish this goal? Or when could you start?
- What are your personal strengths and how can they be used to accomplish this goal?
- What are your weaknesses and how will they impact this goal?
- What might get in the way: To do list, e-mail, our stories we tell ourselves, etc.
- What consequences might this have?
- What could you try?
- Who could do this best?

Listen to learn ideas, insights, and innovations. Test the truth. Once a plan is established, review the actions that need to take place for clarity and agreement; making sure everyone’s part in the process has been identified. The coach then holds the client accountable for action, provides structure and support during the process, and acknowledges the accomplishments and results. Coaching others might be the single most rewarding thing you ever do.

Reference books:

- Managing Transitions by William Bridges
- Coaching in Organizations by Linda Miller
- Managing at the Speed of Change by Daryl Conner
- Who Killed Change by John Britt